

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

July 13, 2006

Flathead Valley Community College

Kalispell, Montana

The July 13, 2006 meeting of the Montana Board of Education was called to order by Governor Brian Schweitzer.

ROLL CALL

Members present were: Regents Steve Barrett, Lynn Morrison-Hamilton, Heather O'Loughlin, Janine Pease and Clay Christian and Board of Public Education members Dr. Kirk Miller, Diane Fladmo, Cal Gilbert, Patty Myers, Storrs Bishop and Angela McLean. Ex-officio members present were Governor Schweitzer, Superintendent McCulloch and Commissioner Stearns. Regents Semmens and Taylor were excused.

The minutes of the January 12, 2006 meeting were approved as corrected.

Governor Schweitzer opened the meeting with comments on a new direction in education. His vision is that there should no longer be a situation with different education groups vying for dollars, but that there should be seamless relations between the groups. Education is a great equalizer. We need to judge on a person's talents and abilities to learn and lead. We need to equalize the opportunity for an education.

Governor Schweitzer thanked both boards for their work in releasing information regarding the CI97 Tabor initiative.

Evan Barrett of the Governor's Office of Economic Development presented a report on the Governor's economic development vision, Montana's current economic situation, the challenges ahead, and bridging the job quality gap. He commented on the impact of aging on economic development and the connection between economic development and education. Suggested solutions were new worker training, incumbent worker training, including on the job training and distance learning. He also spoke on the state government economic development structure.

Tony Priete of the Department of Commerce gave the background of the department and its mission. He explained the work of the Montana Facility Finance Authority, the Housing Division, the Montana Promotions Division, the Board of Investments, the Community Development Division, and the Business Resources Division. Mr. Priete went on to describe the Workforce Training Program. He talked about the major emphasis of agriculture and value added agriculture. They have worked with the various units of higher education to create university programs necessary to meet specific needs with the end result being to help students move into jobs. Mr. Priete also talked about Training Assistance Programs, Big Sky Economic Development, Sustaining Systems and concluded that no single agency has all the resources; it will take all agencies working together to succeed.

Dore Schwinden, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry spoke on the top ten occupations with the largest projected growth that will require post secondary education. He discussed the education and training opportunities provided by the Apprenticeship and Job Training program, Jobs for Montana Graduates, Montana Career Resource Network, Montana Career Information System, and Montana Job Service

Joel Clairmont, Administrator of the Agricultural Development Division of the Department of Agriculture discussed their mission and role in Montana's economic development. The Agriculture Department's programs include Growth Through Agriculture, Renewable Energy Projects, International Marketing Program, Wheat & Barley Committee, Agriculture in Montana Schools and Noxious Weed Program

Governor Schweitzer thanked the presenters for the information and opened the meeting for questions and comments from the board and the public.

Governor Schweitzer made follow-up comments that people wonder how all of these programs affect "me". Two reasons are that we can't increase programs or provide for new programs unless we get the economy growing. We need to encourage science and technology fields for graduates. Governor Schweitzer commented on jobs being outsourced to India. He stated that educated people are the fuel needed to produce the kind of education system needed to keep the engine moving. He stated that the Board of Education needs to do its job to produce the kind of graduates that are needed to provide Montana with the skilled work force that is needed.

Jan Lombardi addressed the homework assignments given at the previous board meeting and asked representatives from OPI, BPE and OCHE to give reports on their progress.

Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent of Public Instruction thanked David Ewer for working with the legislature to get money for the student information database. She reported that work on the data base was progressing.

She reported on her homework assignments as follows:

- High School Initiative -- They are working to open dialogue across the state on how to improve Montana's high schools, supporting local efforts and learning from past experiences, building community involvement and formulating a strategy that works for Montana. A high school initiative summit is scheduled for June, 2007.
- Closing the American Indian Student Achievement Gap -- OPI has established support teams to provide on-site technical assistance to schools. Teams are made up of active or retired teachers, administrators, university faculty members, parents, community members and OPI staff. Teams evaluate schools identified for improvement and develop recommendations for each school to improve teaching and learning. The long term goal is to make this program available to all schools.
- Lowering the Drop-out rate --Six school districts were awarded Federal Drop Out Prevention Grants. Over the past three years these schools have used their

funding in various ways to improve student academic achievement at the middle school and high school levels. OPI will analyze critical elements of these districts programs and draft a state-wide plan for dropout prevention that will be disseminated for review.

- Increasing Graduation Rates -- Superintendent McCulloch discussed several programs that can be used to increase graduation rates, i.e. full-time kindergarten, lower class size, increased reading proficiency, professional development focus on at-risk and American Indian students, closing the achievement gap for at-risk students, after school programs, family and community participation, increasing access to educational technology, accurate reporting, a strong collaboration between K-12 and higher education and Indian Education for All.
- Indian Education for All -- To facilitate Indian Education for All (IEFA), OPI has distributed 17 Ready to Go Grants to school districts. Applications for round two grants have been received. Implementation Assistance Grants were made to educational organizations other than school districts to develop materials and resources to implement IEFA. Graduate Student Research Grants have been sent to 13 Montana University System graduate students. OPI has completed resource development in the following areas: re-designed the OPI IEFA website, developed K-12 grade level expectations tied to IEFA for social studies, FWP developed 30 lessons incorporating IEFA into the FWP's site-based school programs in state parks, two traveling trunks on IEFA were developed by the Historical Society with funding from OPI, developed a guidance and recommendation for materials, textbooks and professional development, developed a funding spectrum to assist schools with quality spending of IEFA and At-Risk funding appropriated by the legislature, and collaborated with Montana Indian Education Association, tribal leaders, educators and students to develop tribal government model curriculum.

Superintendent McCulloch also discussed completed and upcoming projects to develop resources and professional development opportunities, review and update existing resources and develop a public education campaign to educate the public about IEFA.

Steve Meloy thanked the Governor for presenting the Workforce Development information and commented that the Board of Public Education scored a success with the bullying rule amendment. They worked with local educators and developed a rule that required a policy but left the details of the policy up to the local districts.

The Board of Public Education was encouraging not only increased opportunity for financial education in all grades particularly high school but that there should be more job opportunities created for high school students to work part-time. This would enable students to not only begin to develop a work ethic but emphasize the connection between education, a good job and greater economic reward. The education community needs to develop more and stronger partnerships with employers. Preparing students for entry into the work world needs to be a large part of high school reform.

Mr. Meloy acknowledged his appreciation for the good things that Jan Lombardi and the Governor are doing in the budget pipeline to work on strategies so schools have the finances to meet the Board's accreditation requirements.

The Governor presented board members an opportunity to comment on the reports.

Storrs Bishop commented on the conference on the unified budget. He stated it was good to see the Board of Education work together on unified budget.

Patty Myers stated that she had attended the National Conference on Early Childhood Education. Kindergarten is now a growing area of concern. She noted that there were economic paybacks for early childhood education.

Angela McLean commented that she hoped the legislators and boards would work with OPI to advance civic education in the schools.

Kirk Miller commented on the retention of scientists and engineers in Montana and the need to educate and recruit students in these fields. Education is the foundation upon which to build a better Montana, but there are challenges.

Commissioner Stearns thanked her colleagues and introduced the new regents Clay Christian and Janine Pease. She discussed her homework assignments, i.e. affordability and access to higher education, consistent efficiency, cost and transferability of credits. She thanked Linda Peterson for her work with Renee Dubay and Jan Clinard. Commissioner Stearns stated that the writing proficiency report was encouraging. She discussed the WICHE regional 2006 benchmarks. She concluded that they are trying to make two year colleges more affordable. Their number one goal is to maintain quality with a zero tuition increase. She pledged to continue to work with Governor and legislature in transferability of credits, distance learning, Indian Education for All, and needs based aid to low income students so that no one was left behind.

Regent Barrett commented on the chart showing that public spending for education had declined and asked who bears the responsibility? Unless the line goes up we fail our constitutional duty. He stated that we have to hope the citizens will get the legislature to change its mind set as a matter of public policy.

Governor Schweitzer said the greater challenge was school readiness. We all have to be on board, not only for full-time kindergarten but kids being ready for schools and schools being ready for kids. It will take a joint effort to accomplish these goals. High schools need to go beyond drop out prevention and prepare students for the world of work. We need to see the implementation of dual credit and a complete integration of math and science.

The Governor stated that the Board's third assignment is to address a technology framework that includes a long term vision that addresses both the Boards' and the Superintendent's need for data, the need to understand data and the need to deliver education in different ways through distance learning.

Governor Schweitzer presented a Resolution to Establish the Kindergarten to College Workgroup and dissolve Four Committees: P-20, Indian Education for All, Unified Budget and Policy. The key feature of the resolution would be that all four committees would be integrated into a K-college advisory workgroup to the Board of Education. He acknowledged the work done to date, but stated a need to move forward and keep the process going. The resolution allows the Board of Education to be responsive. The members of the workgroup will come from education leadership groups and appointed by the Governor. Support staff for the workgroup will be Linda Peterson, Renee Dubay and support staff from the Board of Regents and the Governor's office.

Regent Morrison moved to adopt the Governor's resolution and Regent Christian seconded. The Governor called for discussion on the motion.

Superintendent McCulloch recommended that all of the boards have a standing item for an update on Indian Education for All Montanans.

Regent Pease said that the challenge for all was how to bring Indian Education for All leadership to the committee now that the momentum was high. She hopes they will think of the level of effort and consider who the leaders are.

Following discussion the board voted on the motion and the motion carried.

David Ewer addressed the Board of Education regarding the unified budget. He thanked those that prepared the requests and said that the challenge was to insure that we are educating people for life. He acknowledged the collective effort to try to target resources that target the needs of kids. All EPP requests are on the web. He pledged to make the unified budget as easy to understand as possible.

Kirk Miller moved to adopt the unified budget and Storrs seconded. Following a vote on the motion, the motion carried.

Kirk Miller wanted to remind people of the value of the process of talking together to prepare the budget and called attention to the fact that one proposal may create other needs.

Jan Lombardi gave special recognition to Nancy Hall and Mark Bruno of the Governor's Budget Office for compiling agency requests.

David Ewer thanked his staff and the staffs of the agencies. He expressed his wish that the budget touched everyone's needs and that everyone's concerns were heard.

The Governor announced that it was time for public comment.

Pat Clouber of the US Department of Education commented that in her experience it was unique that all policy makers would be gathering together to focus on education. She said in global competition it's what you know not where you live. She said she would be watching to see how Montana moved forward.

Joyce Silverthorne, member of the Montana Indian Education Association expressed her concern for the Governor's resolution and that Indian educators and parents would be involved in the new workgroup. She also had a concern about the distance learning policy and wondered who would be the gatekeeper and determine when distance learning was not appropriate. She reported that since the CS & KT tribe had made a high school diploma a requirement to receiving trust funds, individuals were obtaining high school diplomas on-line. She is concerned that they may not be legitimate.

Governor Schweitzer addressed Joyce's first concern by commenting that the Indian Education for All group had not met since 2004. He also commented that presently there were more Indian people in his cabinet and on boards and they were decision makers as opposed to advisors.

Joyce expressed her appreciation of that, but still has on-going concerns.

Commissioner Stearns said she would ask Commissioner Barber to look into the internet high school diplomas and report back.

Kirk Miller commented that the distance learning rule review needed to be put on a fast track.

There was no further public comment.

Steve Barrett moved to adjourn the meeting, Patty Myers seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda McCulloch, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Secretary to the Board of Education